

appellant's claim and appeal may, if in the opinion of the Board the issues before the Board are sufficiently defined, be deemed to set forth his complaint and the respondent shall be so notified.

(b) *Respondent.* Within 30 days from receipt of said complaint, or the aforesaid notice from the Board, respondent shall prepare and file with the Board an original and one copy of an answer thereto, setting forth simple, concise, and direct statements of respondent's defenses to each claim asserted by appellant. This pleading shall fulfill the generally recognized requirements of an answer, and shall set forth any affirmative defenses or counter-claims as appropriate. Upon receipt thereof, the Board shall serve a copy upon appellant. Should the answer not be received within 30 days, the Board may, in its discretion, enter a general denial on behalf of the Government, and the appellant shall be so notified.

§ 955.8 Amendments of pleadings or record.

(a) The Board upon its own initiative or upon application by a party may, in its discretion, order a party to make a more definite statement of the complaint or answer, or to reply to an answer.

(b) The Board may, in its discretion, and within the proper scope of the appeal, permit either party to amend his pleading upon conditions just to both parties. When issues within the proper scope of the appeal, but not raised by the pleadings or the documentation described in § 955.5, are tried by express or implied consent of the parties, or by permission of the Board, they shall be treated in all respects as if they had been raised therein. In such instances, motions to amend the pleadings to conform to the proof may be entered, but are not required. If evidence is objected to at a hearing on the ground that it is not within the issues raised by the pleadings or the documentation required pursuant to § 955.5 (which shall be deemed part of the pleadings for this purpose), it may be admitted within the proper scope of the appeal, provided, however, that the objecting party may be granted a continuance if necessary to enable him to meet such evidence.

§ 955.9 Hearing election.

Upon receipt of respondent's answer or the notice referred to in the last sentence of § 955.7(b), appellant shall advise whether he desires a hearing as prescribed in §§ 955.18 through 955.26, or whether, in the alternative, he elects to submit his case on the record without a hearing, as prescribed in § 955.12. In appropriate cases, the appellant shall also elect whether he desires the optional small claims (expedited) procedure or accelerated procedure prescribed in § 955.13.

[41 FR 7408, Feb. 18, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 57938, Nov. 24, 1995]

§ 955.10 Prehearing briefs.

Based on an examination of the documentation described in § 955.5, the pleadings, and a determination of whether the arguments and authorities addressed to the issues are adequately set forth therein, the Board may, in its discretion, require the parties to submit prehearing briefs in any case in which a hearing has been elected pursuant to § 955.9. In the absence of a Board requirement therefor, either party may, in its discretion and upon appropriate and sufficient notice to the other party, furnish a prehearing brief to the Board. In any case where a prehearing brief is submitted, it shall be furnished so as to be received by the Board at least 15 days prior to the date set for hearing, and a copy shall simultaneously be furnished to the other party as previously arranged.

§ 955.11 Prehearing or presubmission conference.

Whether the case is to be submitted pursuant to § 955.12, or heard pursuant to §§ 955.18 through 955.26, the Board may upon its own initiative or upon the application of either party, call upon the parties to appear before a Board Member for a conference to consider:

(a) The simplification or clarification of the issues;

(b) The possibility of obtaining stipulations, admissions, agreements on documents, understandings on matters already of record, or similar agreements which will avoid unnecessary proof;